

Statement of Governor Haley Barbour

March 11, 2004

“On behalf of the 780,000 Mississippi Medicaid recipients who risk losing their health care coverage today, **I am calling a Special Session of the Legislature that will begin tomorrow at 1 p.m.**

It has been my hope from the time the Medicaid deficit was announced two and a half months ago, that there would be a speedy resolution to this crisis. Today’s adjournment by the House of Representatives at 9:30 a.m., on the last day Medicaid recipients can be guaranteed health care coverage, was an absolute dereliction of duty. Walking away is not a solution. Medicaid recipients cannot wait any longer; action must be taken immediately.

As I have stated before, there is only one way to address this \$268 million Medicaid deficit. Health Care Trust Fund dollars are ready to be used to avert this emergency. Any long term discussion on the future of Medicaid should not prevent the immediate action that is necessary right now.

One out of every four Mississippians is depending on state leaders to act now and not wait.”

#